

VZCZCXRO5559
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHTRO #0871/01 3121122
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 071122Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4087
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR PRIORITY 0023
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE PRIORITY 0014
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 0087
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 4609

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TRIPOLI 000871

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG, AF/C AND NEA/MAG
NSC FOR PITTMAN/HUDSON
PARIS FOR KANEDA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/7/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CD](#) [AU](#) [SU](#) [LY](#)
SUBJECT: LIBYA'S TRI-LATERAL DIPLOMACY AND A PERSPECTIVE ON
SLA/UNITY'S EFFORTS IN DARFUR

REF: A) TRIPOLI 719, B) TRIPOLI 281

TRIPOLI 00000871 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Chris Stevens, CDA, Embassy Tripoli, U.S. Dept of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary. Both the GOL and Darfur rebel groups resident in Tripoli are busy crafting agreements with their respective interlocutors regarding efforts in Darfur. In late October, Libya chaired a "Tripartite Committee" meeting, brokering an agreement between Chad and Sudan that called for an exchange of ambassadors in early November and a commitment to refrain from providing support to opposition groups in both countries. Libyan officials told us the parties also agreed to stand up a 2,000-member bilateral security force on the Chad-Sudan border; that agreement was not included in the joint statement issued after the meeting. At the same time, representatives of SLA/Unity in Libya en route to southern Darfur discussed their efforts to bring other rebel groups under the SLA/Unity umbrella (they claimed JEM/Collective and members of Khalil Ibrahim's leadership were in the process of joining with SLA/Unity) to enable a strike against Khartoum. Abdallah Yehia's leadership of SLA/Unity is undisputed, according to them. They outlined their strategic approach, criticizing the less effective tactical mindset of other rebel groups, and were dismissive of both the Sudan People's Initiative and Qatari efforts. End Summary.

GOL CLAIMS DIPLOMATIC VICTORY, BUT IMPLEMENTATION NOT ASSURED

12. (C) Ali Treiki, MFA Secretary for African Affairs (U/S-equivalent), hosted Sudan's Presidential Advisor, Mustafa Osman Ismael, and Chad's Foreign Minister, Moussa Faki, for talks in Tripoli on October 22-23. The parties released a joint statement agreeing to refrain from providing support to opposition groups in both countries and to an exchange of ambassadors between Chad and Sudan before November 7. They also committed to a series of follow-on meetings in Tripoli November 19-20. Treiki's chief of staff, Mahmoud Azzabi, characterized both sides as "desperate," but said that negotiations had nevertheless been "very difficult." A Libyan-led joint security force comprising 1,000 troops each from Chad and Sudan was not announced in the joint communique; however, in an October 27 meeting, Treiki told the CDA that both sides had agreed to contribute to the force, which will be deployed at 10 points along the border. Treiki stressed that the joint Chad-Sudan force is designed to augment efforts of UN/AU forces already in place.

13. (C) The GOL also plans to host on November 15 a military and security meeting between the three parties, which will run through the next meeting of the Tripartite Committee on November 19-20. French and British diplomats have told us that Muammar al-Qadhafi plans to host a Deby-Bashir summit in Tripoli by the end of November (Note: Treiki also said there would be a summit, but was vague on the timeframe. End note.) Chadian diplomats here told contacts they were doubtful the follow-on meetings would occur given the Contact Group meeting scheduled to take place in N'Djamena November 12-13. Reiterating remarks reported ref A, Treiki was careful not to rule out non-Libyan initiatives, but broke out laughing when asked about Qatar's efforts in Darfur. "Help from any country is appreciated . . . especially if the country is rich," he said, but shared that Qatar's lack of experience in the region and feel for the complex nuances of the situation likely limited its potential contribution to peace efforts.

SLA/UNITY CLAIMS LEADERSHIP ISSUES RESOLVED & SAYS OTHER REBEL GROUPS SEEK TO ALLY WITH IT

14. (C) London-based SLA/Unity Spokesman Mahjoub Hussein and Netherlands-based Saayid Sharif joined Osman Muhammad Busra in a meeting with P/E Chief and Poloff on October 29. Echoing remarks made in our previous meeting with them (ref B), they stressed that internal divisions among SLA/Unity leadership had been resolved, and that Abdallah Yehia is the undisputed leader of SLA/Unity. Yehia's authority stemmed from his election to leadership by other SLA/Unity members in 2006. Other notables - specifically Suliman Jamous and Sharif Harir - were not empowered to negotiate without Yehia's approval. Hussein and Busra claimed that other Darfur rebel groups were in the process of coming under the SLA/Unity umbrella, ostensibly because they "see the strength" of SLA/Unity. Busra said JEM/Collective and even members of SLA/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) were "coming down the mountain to be with us", and claimed some rebel leaders and forces had recently co-located themselves with SLA/Unity forces in southern Darfur. Hussein, Sharif and Busra agreed that Abdul Wahid was a historic figure for Darfur and Sudan, but downplayed his relevance in the future, characterizing him as "a rebel

TRIPOLI 00000871 002.2 OF 002

version 1.0". The longer Wahid remains outside Sudan and away from the fighting, the less credible he is. Hussein claimed that SLA/Unity has enjoyed a recent surge in support from IDP's in the camps, saying they realized that "we (SLA/Unity) are the future".

15. (C) Hussein, Sharif and Busra agreed that stability in Chad was in the strategic interest of SLA/Unity and the region, in part to help serve as a bulwark against a "janjaweed state that would stretch from Khartoum to Mali". Hussein claimed SLA/Unity does not receive direct military or material support from Chad or Libya; however, Khalil Ibrahim and his group receive military equipment and funds from Libya, which is routed through Deby's regime in Ndjama. Hussein and Busra (Sharif was the most reserved of the three) stressed that SLA/Unity's leadership had adopted a more "strategic approach" towards establishing ties with other rebel groups than other rebel leaders, who had followed a more tactically-minded and less effective approach. SLA/Unity's aim was to overthrow Bashir's government in Khartoum, not just to gain tactical advantage vis a vis other groups. Hussein and Sharif were to travel from Tripoli to Kufra, and then on to southern Darfur for meetings "in the field".

SUDAN PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE "A PLOY"; QATARI INITIATIVE NOT SERIOUS

16. (C) Hussein, Sharif and Busra dismissed the Sudan People's Initiative, stressing that "nearly all" Darfurians and Sudanese viewed it as a deliberately-timed ploy to undermine President Bashir's indictment by the ICC. "It is not a genuine initiative, but a game to try to stop the ICC", said Busra. He was equally dismissive of Khartoum's desire to achieve peace. "Bashir's government speaks about peace while preparing for war; the problem in Darfur is not in Darfur, it is in Khartoum", he

said. All three were skeptical that Qatar's recent efforts to play a positive role in Darfur would yield results. Doha did not have relationships with key rebel leaders and lacked a feel for the complicated situation on the ground. Busra claimed Qatari representatives, for example, seemed not to understand the way dynamics in Chad bear on problems in Darfur. The three agreed that Doha's initiative appeared to mostly represent an effort by the Arab League to deflect attention from Bashir's indictment.

17. (C) Comment: Treiki seems serious about developing concrete milestones for progress in Libya's trilateral mediation efforts.

After having been publicly embarrassed by the failure of key rebel leaders to show up in Sirte for peace talks under Libyan auspices, he and the GOL appear to have focused greater attention on the governments in Khartoum and Ndjamena, and relatively less on direct engagement with rebels. Treiki has also been more measured in conversations with us in predicting progress, suggesting that the GOL remains a bit chastened after the public failure of the Sirte process. That said, the GOL has not abandoned its propensity for dating around; Treiki himself suggested that the GOL would seek to re-engage with rebel groups after upcoming meetings attendant to Sudan-Chad rapprochement. The SLA/Unity representatives we speak with appear to have extensive contacts with other rebel groups, but it is difficult to gauge how much of the talk about SLA/Unity gaining strength and attracting allies represents reality, and how much is just rhetoric. End comment.

STEVENS